

24. Senegal
25. Sudan
26. Syria
27. Sierra Leone
28. Somalia
29. Iraq
30. Oman
31. Guinea
32. Guinea-Bissau
33. Palestine
34. Kirghystan
35. Qatar
36. Cameroon
37. Kuwait
38. Lebanon
39. Libya
40. Maldives
41. Mali
42. Malaysia
43. Egypt
44. Morocco
45. Mauritania
46. Niger
47. Nigeria
48. Yemen
49. Mozambique
50. Turkmenistan
51. Tajikistan
52. Kazakhstan
53. Surinam
54. Guyana

[Translation]

Increase in the cost of Passport

*456. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA :
SHRI ILIYAS AZMI :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the cost of passport and increase in the cost made during the last one year;

(b) the reasons for continuous increase in the cost of passport;

(c) whether the Government propose to simplify and streamline the procedure for issuing passports and to reduce its cost; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (d) There has been no increase in the fees for various passport services including issue of fresh passports since July, 1993.

A number of steps have been taken to simplify and streamline the procedures for expeditious issue of passports which, *inter-alia*, are:

- (a) upgradation of office facilities including computerisation leading to faster screening and processing of applications;
- (b) simplification of passport and miscellaneous services forms;
- (c) issue of passports without any further wait for police clearance in cases where police reports are not received during the prescribed time-limit of four weeks;
- (d) a thorough scrutiny of applications at the acceptance stage itself to check their completeness/correctness in all respects;
- (e) augmentation of staff strength to reduce and clear pendencies;
- (f) provision to issue passports in cases of emergency/urgency on out of turn basis on the strength of Verification Certificate issued by an authorised official ;
- (g) expansion of the list of officials authorised to sign Verification Certificates;
- (h) introduction of passports valid for 20 years; and
- (i) automatic reissue of passports on expiry without fresh police verification.

There is no proposal to reduce the fees for passports in view of the constant increase in the cost of production of the passport booklets.

Use of Indian Languages

*457. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have given option to answer questions in all the competitive examinations for recruitment to different services in Indian languages;

(b) if so, the names of all these services;

(c) whether the resolution to this effect passed by the Parliament on 18 January, 1968 has been fully implemented; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which the Government intend to implement it?